

Bye-Law 9: Complaints

9.1 Introduction

Any individual student or a group of students dissatisfied with their dealings with Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union has the right to make a complaint.

Students also have the right to make a complaint if they claim to have been unfairly disadvantaged as a result of opting out of the Students' Union membership.

If a third party is named as part of any complaint, the Students' Union must notify them as to their inclusion.

Confidentiality will be maintained by the person dealing with the complaint and the complainant will not be discriminated against or suffer recriminations as a result of making a complaint.

9.2 What is not a complaint under this procedure

Complaints will not be considered valid if they:

- are made anonymously and/or;
- are made by a third party (including parents, guardians or friends of registered students) and/or;
- have already been investigated and disposed of by the Union and/or;
- are made outside of the time limit and/or;
- are malicious, vexatious or frivolous.

9.3 Complaints procedure

All complaints will be dealt with fairly and promptly and will be investigated according to the three following stages:

- 1) Informal complaint,
- 2) Formal complaint,
- 3) Review stage

9.4 Informal complaint

We expect that most complaints will be resolved via an informal discussion about the matter at the earliest opportunity. A student or other person should therefore bring the matter to the attention of the Manager of the service, or Officer Trustee responsible for the area in question. This may be orally or in writing, including by electronic format and/or the informal complaints feedback form available online.

The recipients of informal complaints are responsible for responding to them promptly and fairly. This would normally be within five working days of receiving the complaint.

9.5 Formal complaint

If the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved informally or if the nature of the complaint is serious, the complainant has the right to raise the matter as a formal complaint. Formal complaints may be made about a service or an individual or group within the Union.

9.6 Making a formal complaint

A formal complaint must be made in writing: (i) by personal letter or (ii) via email (iii) online complaints facility available on the Students' Union website

All complaints should be addressed to the Director of Finance & Resources. A complaint concerning the Director of Finance & Resources must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer. The Director of Finance & Resources or Chief Executive Officer will then ensure that an investigation is undertaken.

Complaints will be considered valid if the complainant: (i) provides details of their name and contact details (ii) the nature of the complaint (iii) raises the complaint within 15 working days of the event or occurrence giving grounds for complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances approved by the Students' Union Chief Executive Officer.

Receipt of formal complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.

Valid complaints will be investigated within 15 working days of receipt.

The complainant will be notified of any undue delay in resolving the complaint as soon as possible.

During the investigation stage the complainant and others involved may be asked to provide verbal evidence for clarification and additional information but no formal hearings will take place.

The person conducting the investigation will determine:

- all findings of fact;
- any mitigating circumstances;
- appropriate further action if any.

Where complaints are upheld, confirmation of this and that appropriate action will be taken will be confirmed in writing to the complainant.

Any disciplinary action to be taken will be done so according to the relevant Students' Union procedures which may include:

- staff disciplinary procedures
- Bye-Law 10 Disciplinary Procedure and Appeals (student members)
- clause 26 in the Constitution under the heading Disqualification, Resignation and Removal of Trustees.

9.7 Review stage

Where complaints are not upheld the complainant will be advised after completion of the investigation and informed of the right to raise the matter with Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union Board of Trustees.